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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the merit of using the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (P-HCSCS) for the purpose for which it was designed. The study originally planned to obtain information on the relationship of self-concept to reading achievement. Initial findings demonstrated an inconsistency in attitude in 59 of the 64 participating third graders by their contradictory responses to certain P-HCSCS items which the investigator considered to be interrelated. Eighteen of the original 64 participants were tested further by meeting individually with the examiner for four thirty minute sessions. P-HCSCS statements were read aloud and the testee was asked to explain the meaning of each statement. Based on Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills results, student abilities ranged from superior to below average, but all were reading at grade level or better. Findings indicated that 43 of the 80 P-HCSCS statements were misinterpreted as evidenced by the students' oral reponses. Based on all the findings the investigator questioned the advisability of using the P-HCSCS with children reading at the third grade level. Appended tables contain the P-HCSCS statements and responses which demonstrated inconsistencies in the initial study and student oral responses interpreting P-HCSCS statements considered incorrect by the examiner. (BS)

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THE PIERS-HARRIS CHILDREN'S SELF-CONCEPT SCALE: IS IT REALLY SUITABLE FOR USE WITH CHILDREN AT THE THIRD GRADE LEVEL ?

Gloria T. Mann ++

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This study has investigated the merit of using the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale for the purpose for which it was designed. On the basis of all the findings the investigator questions the advisability of using the instrument with children reading at the third-grade level. (Author/GTM)

Students who feel positive about themselves and their abilities are the ones who are most likely to succeed. Conversely, children who view themselves in unfavorable ways usually experience academic failure. Significant positive correlations between ones self-concept and reading achievement have been reported. It has been suggested that problems encountered in learning to read may be related to poor self-concept. Furthermore, it has been found that children who experience success realize improvement in their reading ability and changes in their self-concept (27)(28).

The present study as originally planned was undertaken: 1) to obtain information with respect to the relationship of self-concept to reading achievement, and 2) to utilize the findings as a basis for developing classroom strategies to help offset academic difficulties through the building of positive self-worth.

PART I. THE STUDY AS ORIGINALLY PLANNED

METHOD

Participants

The participants in the study consisted of 578 students in grades 2 through 7 enrolled in a K-8 school district. All come from predominately socio-economically advantaged homes.

Instruments

The following standardized instruments were utilized: a) The Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS)+, the Test of Cognitive Skills (TCS)+, and the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (P-H CSCS). The first two measure academic achievement and academic aptitude respectively. Furthermore, standard operational procedures in the district-wide testing program require the annual use of both instruments. The Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale or " The Way I Feel About Myself." (22)(23) was chosen to assess self-concept. Considered by many to be among the best of the self-report instruments currently in use for this purpose (5)(31)(40), it is comprised of 80 test items which have been written as simple declarative statements with a yes/no response for each. The items have been developed from Jersild's (10) collection of statements reflecting attitudes of children. There are no time limits to complete the scale which takes approximately 30 minutes to administer and which yields a global score and six cluster scores, each purporting to measure a subdimension of self-concept. The authors of the scale consider it to be a reliable and valid instrument (22)(24).

+ Both the (CTBS) and the (TCS) are published by CTB/McGraw-Hill, Monterey, California, 93940.

Procedure

The P-H CSCS was administered by the investigator (examiner), mid-year, with the aid of a proctor, in classroom settings to: 79 students in grade 2, 64 in grade 3, 109 in grade 4, 103 in grade 5, 106 in grade 6, and 117 in grade 7. District-wide testing with both the CTBS and the TCS was conducted by classroom teachers toward the end of the school year. Procedures for the administration of the tests were followed as set forth in the manuals. As concerns the P-H CSCS, protocol was adhered to in that both the directions and the test items were read aloud. In addition to following the standard directions, the examiner while giving the test: a) selected and defined words used in the items which she considered unlikely to be part of a child's meaning vocabulary, and b) permitted the students to request definitions for any words which were not understood in the statements read to them. The CTBS and the TCS were machine scored by the publisher of these materials. In contrast, the P-H CSCS was hand scored and the papers reviewed in-depth by the examiner.

Internal-consistency reliability of the scale was computed using the Kuder-Richardson-20 as outlined in SPSS (9).

FINDINGS AND COMMENTS

For the purpose of this paper, only the findings pertaining to the P-HCSCS and the third grade students who took the test, will be reported.

Of the 64 third-grade students who participated in the study, 59 demonstrated inconsistency in attitude by their contradictory responses to certain statements (items) on the P-HCSCS which the investigator considered to be interrelated according to the concepts presented in the statements. As seen in Table 1., the statements with their corresponding answers have been grouped into sets. This was accomplished, it should be emphasized, without using statistical methodology. Therefore, the manner in which the statements are arranged in the table bears no relationship whatsoever to the results of factor analysis or the way the items have been found to cluster as reported by Piers, Stanwyck, and others (16)(19)(21)(25)(30)(35)(38). Possible reasons for the lack of consistency in attitude are: 1) problems with the vocabulary load in the test items, 2) misunderstanding of the concepts presented in the statements, or the desire to present a favorable image of oneself. Contradictory responses to the statements could also be attributed to denial of

feelings. As succinctly stated by Shein,** "The ego needs to deny things that are malevolent to itself." For example, referring to the combination of statements # 8 and # 54, it is inconceivable that someone who feels that he is not good looking would not let this bother him. Likewise, referring to the combination of statements # 5 and # 53, it is unlikely that if one considers himself smart he would also consider himself dumb.

Attention should be focused on the 295 sets which the investigator, through item-analysis, extracted from the test papers of these same (59) third-grade students (Table 2.). Thisis an inordinate number of sets and would cause one to question the reliability of the answers which were given and whether the students were accurately indicating the way they felt about themselves. It would also suggest that little significance be attached to the test scores.

It was noted that the majority of the 64 students had answered items # 71 and # 77 in one direction. The acceptable answer was no, as provided on the scoring key, for the statements: I would rather work alone than with a group., and I am different from other people. These students however, circled yes. It would appear that they did not consider a yes answer as reflecting negative self-attitude.

** Personal communication with Dr. Sam Shein, Clinical Psychologist, Teaneck, New Jersey.

Based on the answers from all 64 students, the mean for the total score was 63.6 and the standard deviation was ± 9.3 Internal-consistency reliability of the scale was found to be 0.79***

PART II. THE REVISED STUDY

As stated in the introduction the purpose of the study, as originally planned, was to investigate the relationship of self-concept to reading achievement. However, as a result of the findings reported in Part I., a decision was made to alter the direction the study was to have taken and to table, for the time being, the data collected pertaining to reading achievement. Instead, it was decided to investigate the merit of using the P-H CSCS for the purpose for which it was designed. The following observations, noted during the administration of the scale, rendered additional support to the decision:

1) The inordinate number of requests from students, particularly at the lower grade levels, for definitions of words appearing in the various statements, and
2) The types of questions posed by the students, at all grade levels, in an effort to diminish the ambiguity of certain statements.

*** The investigator is grateful to both George Ronan, Department of Psychology, Fairleigh Dickinson University, Teaneck, New Jersey, and Carol M. Yunker, New Jersey Educational Computer Network, Inc. Edison, New Jersey, for their imput in the statistical analysis of the data.

The following statements found in the manual (22)

> "The preliminary pool of 164 statements was administered in a pilot study to a sample of 90 children from the third-, fourth-, and sixth- grade classes in a small school district, with the items being read aloud by the examiners.....The pilot study established that the children understood the items."
>
> "Administered in group form it requires approximately a third-grade reading knowledge"

indicated that the most appropriate level at which to commence with the new investigation should be the third grade. It was likewise quite obvious that it would be advisable to utilize students from this grade level as the starting point after reading the statements presented below which were made by the senior author of the test (++)

> " In the beginning, i.e. in the pilot work, we established that it was suitable for the third graders by asking them individually what they thought the question meant, and why they answered the way they did. Their understanding was later confirmed by the test-retest reliabilities reported in the Manual and the Research Monograph (1977)."
>
> " Although results have not been standardized, I have found the test-retest reliabilities satisfactory for second grade but not for first grade. These findings, plus the other studies quoted in the Research Monograph on this issue suggest that it probably can be used successfully as low as the second grade, but because of the possibility of increased randomness of responding I have not encouraged its use below the third grade."

(++) Written communication from Dr. Ellen V. Piers, Department of Psychology, The Pennsylvania State University.

" Rather than be concerned with reading level per se, psychologists are primarily concerned with reliability and validity. If the test discriminates, gives results that are predictable, and in other ways proves useful, then it is assumed that it is appropriate for that age group."

" The quotes from the reviewers are not documented because they are simply repeating my claims in the Manual. I think since its publication, we have ample evidence that it is appropriate at least for third graders."

METHOD

Participants

Eighteen students were selected for additional testing. All were part of the original 64 participants coming from four, third-grade classes. Based on the results of the CTBS, their reading abilities ranged but all were reading at grade level or better. Of the 18, six were chosen from each of three different comprehension ability groups, namely: superior, average, and below average.

Procedure

The examiner met with each student on an individual basis, for four, 30 minute sessions. During each session, 20 different statements from the P-HCSCS were read aloud and the testee was asked

to explain the meaning of each statement. The children were encouraged to respond and to elaborate, if necessary, in order to insure that their answers would be as comprehensible as possible. All responses were recorded and analyzed to determine whether the vocabulary and the concepts presented in the statements were understood. Flexible standards were used in scoring to avoid penalizing those who understood but were unable to express themselves articulately. Responses given to explain the meaning of a statement through the use of an example were considered acceptable. For the purpose of illustration, " I am usually lucky at horse races." was accepted for Item # 36, I am lucky, and " The teacher wants to pick someone for something and you volunteer". was accepted for Item # 42, I often volunteer in school. Also considered acceptable were responses interpreted by the examiner as being either the cause or the result of behaviors implied in the statements. For example, " To think that I can't do it." was accepted for Item # 28, I am nervous., and " You would cry if you don't get your own way." was accepted for Item # 18, I usually want my own way.

FINDINGS AND COMMENTS

Data on student # 18 was incomplete due to frequent absenteeism and therefore has not been included.

As part of the findings presented in Part I it was noted that the majority of the 64 third-grade students, who participated in the study as originally planned, answered item # 71 and # 77 incorrectly by circling yes. Conjecture by the examiner that a yes answer was not considered as reflecting negative self-attitude was confirmed by 17 of the third-grade students who were selected for additional testing. The consensus was that working alone was more conducive than working in a group to complete assigned tasks. The 17 students were also in concert in stating that no two people look alike, behave alike, or have similar thoughts. According to the manual, items # 71 and # 77 are classified as neutral, reflecting neither high nor low self-concept. If a statement is neutral, then either a yes or a no answer should be acceptable thereby imposing no scoring penalty. Preferably, neutral items should not have been included in the scale.

In reference to Table 3 and 4, 43 of the 80 statements on the P-H CSCS were misinterpreted as evidenced by the oral responses which the 17 students gave. Items # 11 and # 78 were the two most frequently misunderstood followed by #'s 35, 57, 55, 69, 20, 61, 65, 73, etc. in descending order. For the purpose of illustration, sixteen students misinterpreted item # 11, I am unpopular. The response " I am not well known." was given by three students as was the response " not many people know you." As previously stated,

all students were reading at grade level or better although their abilities in comprehension ranged. Regardless of ones level of comprehension, errors were made by the entire group in interpreting the statements. This is due to: 1) the use of words in the test items which are not part of a child's meaning vocabulary, and 2) the inability to relate to the concepts presented in the statements and to grasp their meanings.

As shown in Table 5, due to the wording, 11 of the 80 statements on the P-H CSCS were interpreted in variant ways by the majority of the students. In the opinion of the investigator, either a yes or a no answer to these eleven statements would reflect diverse perceptions and not necessarily negative self-attitudes. For the purpose of clarity, the statements should have been worded in a manner which would have eliminated ambiguity.

Evidence is presented in Tables 4 and 6 to support the investigator's contention that the test scores lack authenticity and are useless. To illustrate:

a) Student # 1 did not understand the meanings of 12 statements on the scale. According to the scoring key, all of these statements were answered correctly on his test paper. One would reason that it was solely by chance that the student could respond appropriately to twelve statements consisting of concepts and/or vocabulary that were unknown to him. It should be noted that the student attained a total score of 77.

b) Student # 15, who attained a total score of 43, did not understand the meanings of 10 statements although 8 of them were answered correctly on the test paper. He likewise circled the wrong answers, according to the scoring key, for 7 other statements which were shown to be ambiguous and for which either yes or no should have been acceptable. The same student gave contradictory responses to certain statements on the scale which the investigator considered to be interrelated. Although impossible to accurately measure the effect inconsistency in attitude has on the test score, the role which it can play should not be minimized.

Due to time constraints, the data presented in the second part of this paper is based on 17 subjects. However, from preliminary observations, it is reasonable to assume that the findings would have been similar providing the opportunity had arisen to allow the examiner to interrogate an additional number of comparable students from among the original 64 participants.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

On the basis of the findings reported in this paper the following conclusions are warranted:

1) Many of the items included in the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale are not suitable for use with students in the third grade.

2) Administered either in group form or on an individual basis, the instrument requires that the reading level of the testee be above the third grade.

3) The scale is not an appropriate instrument for measuring the self-concept of third-grade students.

Two important questions emerge from the substance of this study, namely:

1. How extensively has the scale been used with populations for whom the language was not suitable ?
2. Was the data which was obtained with these populations used: a) to quantitate self-concept, b) to determine the relationship of self-concept to academic achievement and other variables, c) to establish correlations with the P-H CSCS and other self-report instruments employed to measure self-concept, and d) to investigate the internal components of this scale.

These questions are germane to the numerous investigations which have been conducted using the P-H CSCS with populations from the third grade as well as with populations from the second grade, the first grade, and from the pre-school level. This includes children in general education, special education, and those who were institutionalized. (1)(2)(3)(4)(6-9)(11-14)(16-20)(26)(29)(32-37)(30).**

**Copies of theses/dissertations, in which the abstract appears in either Masters Abstracts or Dissertation Abstracts International, may be obtained from University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106.

In conclusion, the following paragraph has been inserted to re-emphasize the underlying theme (s) of the present paper. As candidly stated by Lynch and Chaves (15),

> " Piers and Harris (1964) reported a somewhat quasi effort to validate their scale in which they showed that a small sampling of institutionalized retardates scored lower on their self concept test than did a non institutionalized sample of public school children. Such institutionalized groups of children will likely differ on almost any attribute one selects to measure and hence, this study shows little about the validity of the P-H test. Parenthetically, one might question whether the retarded sample of children fully understood the task they were asked to do, and Piers and Harris provide no evidence on this matter, even though it seems critical to their use of this group for the purposes of a validity test"

Addendum:

With another population of third-graders (n= 80), we have recently completed a second study to investigate the merit of using the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale for the purpose for which it was designed. The results obtained, which will be furnished upon request and which we plan to report at some later date, were consistent with the findings presented in this paper.

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TABLE 1. The use of certain statements on the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale, which the examiner considered to be interrelated, as a means of demonstrating inconsistence in attitude among 59 third-grade students.

Item # and statement **	Response circled by the student	Item # and statement **	Response circled by the student
(64) I am clumsy.	yes	(29) I have pretty eyes.	no
(75) I am always dropping or breaking things.	no	(41) I have nice hair.	no
		(54) I am good looking.	yes
(22) I do many bad things.	yes		
(56) I get into a lot of fights.	yes	(29) I have pretty eyes.	yes
(48) I am often mean to other people.	yes	(41) I have nice hair.	yes
(76) I can be trusted.	no	(54) I am good looking.	no
(39) I like the way I am.	yes		
(43) I wish I were different.	no	(8) My looks bother me.	no
		(54) I am good looking.	no

** The statements, in order to show their interrelationship, have been arranged in sets. Each set consists of two or more statements with corresponding answers. It should be noted that although the statements are the same in some of the sets, the answers differ. 84 different combinations are presented.

(8)	My looks bother me.	yes
(54)	I am good looking.	yes
(29)	I have pretty eyes.	no
(41)	I have nice hair.	no
(54)	I am good looking.	no
(8)	My looks bother me.	no
(8)	My looks bother me.	no
(29)	I have pretty eyes.	yes
(41)	I have nice hair.	yes
(54)	I am good looking.	no
(54)	I am good looking.	yes
(60)	I have a pleasant face.	no
(78)	I think bad thoughts.	yes
(80)	I am a good person.	yes
(22)	I do many bad things.	yes
(80)	I am a good person.	yes
(48)	I am often mean to other people.	yes
(80)	I am a good person.	yes

(22)	I do many bad things.	yes
(56)	I get into a lot of fights.	yes
(48)	I am often mean to other people.	yes
(76)	I can be trusted.	no
(78)	I think bad thoughts.	yes
(80)	I am a good person.	yes
(22)	I do many bad things.	yes
(48)	I am often mean to other people.	yes
(78)	I think bad thoughts.	yes
(80)	I am a good person.	yes
(62)	I am picked on at home.	yes
(58)	People pick on me.	no
(1)	My classmates make fun of me.	yes
(62)	I am picked on at home.	yes
(58)	People pick on me.	no
(48)	I am often mean to other people.	yes
(78)	I think bad thoughts.	yes
(80)	I am a good person.	yes
(17)	I am an important member of my family.	yes
(27)	I am an important member of my class.	yes
(51)	I have many friends.	yes
(40)	I feel left out of things.	yes

(54)	I am good looking.	no
(73)	I have a good figure.	no
(8)	My looks bother me.	no
(54)	I am good looking.	yes
(73)	I have a good figure.	yes
(8)	My looks bother me.	yes
(25)	I behave badly at home.	yes
(35)	I am obedient at home.	yes
(5)	I am smart.	no
(21)	I am good in my school work.	no
(10)	I get worried when we have tests in school.	no
(28)	I am nervous.	yes
(37)	I worry a lot.	yes
(74)	I am often afraid.	no
(28)	I am nervous.	no
(37)	I worry a lot.	yes
(28)	I am nervous.	no
(74)	I am often afraid.	no
(37)	I worry a lot.	yes

(37)	I worry a lot.	yes
(74)	I am often afraid.	yes
(28)	I am nervous.	no
(37)	I worry a lot.	no
(74)	I am often afraid.	no
(28)	I am nervous.	yes
(28)	I am nervous.	no
(37)	I worry a lot.	no
(74)	I am often afraid.	yes
(28)	I am nervous.	no
(37)	I worry a lot.	no
(47)	I am sick a lot.	no
(74)	I am often afraid.	no
(44)	I sleep well at night.	no
(5)	I am smart.	yes
(21)	I am good in my school work.	yes
(66)	I forget what I learn.	no
(70)	I am a good reader.	yes
(27)	I am an important member of my class.	yes
(16)	I have good ideas.	yes
(45)	I hate school.	yes
(5)	I am smart.	yes
(16)	I have good ideas.	no

(7)	I get nervous when the teacher calls on me.	yes
(10)	I get worried when we have tests in school.	yes
(28)	I am nervous.	no
(37)	I worry a lot.	no
(74)	I am often afraid.	no

(7)	I get nervous when the teacher calls on me.	yes
(5)	I am smart.	yes
(21)	I am good in my school work.	yes
(16)	I have good ideas.	yes
(30)	I can give a good report in front of the class.	yes
(66)	I forget what I learn.	no
(70)	I am a good reader.	yes
(10)	I get worried when we have tests in school.	yes

(7)	I get nervous when the teacher calls on me.	yes
(10)	I get worried when we have tests in school.	yes
(28)	I am nervous.	no
(37)	I worry a lot.	no

(5)	I am smart.	yes
(16)	I have good ideas.	yes
(21)	I am good in my school work.	yes
(66)	I forget what I learn.	no
(7)	I get nervous when the teacher calls on me.	yes

(12)	I am well behaved in school.	yes
(5)	I am smart.	yes
(16)	I have good ideas.	yes
(21)	I am good in my school work.	yes
(66)	I forget what I learn.	no
(53)	I am dumb about most things.	no
(7)	I get nervous when the teacher calls on me.	yes
(10)	I get worried when we have tests in school.	yes

(5)	I am smart.	yes
(21)	I am good in my school work.	yes
(70)	I am a good reader.	no

(21)	I am good in my school work.	yes
(70)	I am a good reader.	yes
(5)	I am smart.	no

(5)	I am smart.	no
(53)	I am dumb about most things.	no

(66)	I forget what I learn.	no
(70)	I am a good reader.	yes
(5)	I am smart.	no

(21)	I am good in my school work.	no
(66)	I forget what I learn.	no

(5)	I am smart.	yes
(53)	I am dumb about most things.	yes
(5)	I am smart.	no
(21)	I am good in my school work.	no
(45)	I hate school.	no
(16)	I have good ideas.	yes
(21)	I am good in my school work.	yes
(53)	I am dumb about most things.	no
(66)	I forget what I learn.	no
(5)	I am smart.	no
(12)	I am well behaved in school.	no
(56)	I get into a lot of fights.	yes
(34)	I often get into trouble.	yes
(22)	I do many bad things.	no
(34)	I often get into trouble.	yes
(56)	I get into a lot of fights.	yes
(22)	I do many bad things.	no
(34)	I often get into trouble.	yes
(22)	I do many bad things.	no

(22)	I do many bad things.	yes
(48)	I am often mean to other people.	yes
(56)	I get into a lot of fights.	yes
(76)	I can be trusted.	no
(78)	I think bad thoughts.	yes
(59)	My family is disappointed in me.	no
(14)	I cause trouble to my family.	yes
(59)	My family is disappointed in me.	no
(3)	It is hard for me to make friends.	no
(6)	I am shy.	yes
(3)	It is hard for me to make friends.	yes
(6)	I am shy.	no
(57)	I am popular with boys.	no
(69)	I am popular with girls.	no
(17)	I am an important member of my family.	no
(40)	I feel left out of things.	no
(27)	I am an important member of my class.	no
(49)	My classmates in school think I have good ideas.	yes
(27)	I am an important member of my class.	yes
(49)	My classmates in school think I have good ideas,	no

(2)	I am a happy person.	yes
(4)	I am often sad.	yes
(2)	I am a happy person.	yes
(52)	I am cheerful.	no
(2)	I am a happy person.	yes
(4)	I am often sad.	yes
(52)	I am cheerful.	yes
(2)	I am a happy person.	yes
(50)	I am unhappy.	yes
(11)	I am unpopular.	no
(57)	I am popular with boys.	no
(69)	I am popular with girls.	no
(51)	I have many friends.	yes
(11)	I am unpopular.	no
(57)	I am popular with boys.	no
(69)	I am popular with girls.	no
(11)	I am unpopular.	yes
(51)	I have many friends.	yes
(11)	I am unpopular.	no
(51)	I have many friends.	no

(11)	I am unpopular.	no
(40)	I feel left out of things.	yes
(40)	I feel left out of things.	yes
(51)	I have many friends.	yes
(3)	It is hard for me to make friends.	yes
(51)	I have many friends.	yes
(22)	I do many bad things.	yes
(48)	I am often mean to other people.	yes
(56)	I get into a lot of fights.	yes
(76)	I can be trusted.	no
(39)	I like being the way I am.	yes
(22)	I do many bad things.	yes
(56)	I get into a lot of fights.	yes
(48)	I am often mean to other people.	yes
(76)	I can be trusted.	no
(43)	I wish I were different.	no
(39)	I like being the way I am.	yes
(43)	I wish I were different.	yes
(14)	I cause trouble to my family.	yes
(48)	I am often mean to other people.	yes
(56)	I get into a lot of fights.	yes
(39)	I like being the way I am.	yes

(1)	My classmates make fun of me.	yes
(27)	I am an important member of my class.	yes
(15)	I am strong.	yes
(55)	I have lots of pep.	yes
(47)	I am sick a lot.	yes
(15)	I am strong.	no
(55)	I have lots of pep.	yes
(15)	I am strong.	no
(47)	I am sick a lot.	no
(55)	I have lots of pep.	yes
(15)	I am strong.	no
(47)	I am sick a lot.	yes
(55)	I have lots of pep.	yes
(56)	I get into a lot of fights.	yes
(67)	I am easy to get along with.	yes
(67)	I am easy to get along with.	yes
(68)	I lose my temper easily.	yes
(56)	I get into a lot of fights.	yes
(68)	I lose my temper easily.	yes
(67)	I am easy to get along with.	yes

(18)	I usually want my own way.	yes
(67)	I am easy to get along with.	yes
(18)	I usually want my own way.	yes
(68)	I lose my temper easily.	yes
(67)	I am easy to get along with.	yes
(18)	I usually want my own way.	yes
(68)	I lose my temper easily.	yes
(56)	I get into a lot of fights.	yes
(67)	I am easy to get along with.	yes
(2)	I am a happy person.	yes
(50)	I am unhappy.	yes
(52)	I am cheerful.	yes
(4)	I am often sad.	yes
(52)	I am cheerful.	yes
(2)	I am a happy person.	yes
(4)	I am often sad.	yes
(50)	I am unhappy.	no
(52)	I am cheerful.	yes
(4)	I am often sad.	no
(52)	I am cheerful.	no

TABLE 2. Distribution of the total number (295) of sets reflecting inconsistency in attitude among 59 third-grade students as evidenced by their yes/no responses to statements on the P-H CSCS which the examiner considered to be interrelated.

# of students	Number of sets per student											Sub-total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	13	
1								X				8
1											X	13
2	X											2
3									X			27
3										X		30
3							X					21
6					X							30
7		X										14
9				X								36
10			X									30
14						X						84
Total 59												295

TABLE 3. Oral responses (considered incorrect by the examiner) given by 17 third-grade students based upon their interpretation of certain statements on the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale.

Item # and statement	Listing of the different responses given (X)**
(2) I am a happy person.	" a proud person" " to be a nice person"
(4) I am often sad.	" to be afraid"
(8) My looks bother me.	" I don't look like I've dressed right." " You look different from other people" " Some people are dressed nice and you look sloppy."
(9) When I grow up I will be an important person.	" I don't know what it means."

(X) ** Figures shown in parentheses after the response indicate the total number of students (if more than one student) giving either the same or a similar response.

Note: Student # 18 was frequently absent and attended only two of the four questioning sessions. During this time he gave his interpretation of only 40 of the statements on the scale. Since the data on this student was incomplete it was not incorporated into this table or into Tables 4 and 5.

(11) I am unpopular.	" I am not well known." (2)**
	" not many people know you." (3)**
	" I am not often mentioned by the teacher."
	" A lot of people don't know you."
	" You are not like other people."
	" Some people are smarter than you."
	" You are not familiar with a lot of people."
	" I am normal."
	" I am not important in school."
	" You are not famous."
	" that I haven't been around school a lot."
	" not into things."
	" They think thay are so great."
(13) It is usually my fault when something goes wrong.	" when you do something wrong everybody thinks you are stupid."
	" your brother or sister did it and your brother tells your mother your sister did it."
	" if you build a paper airplane and it doesn't fly it is your fault."
	" you are not bad."
(14) I cause trouble to my family.	" to make them do something wrong or something."
(16) I have good ideas.	" you do things that your friends like you to do."
	" that you have good taste."

(17) I am an important member of my family.	" I don't know."
	" that you are not like anybody else, you are different."
(18) I usually want my own way.	" I'm unselfish."
	" some kids won't let you do what you want to do."
(20) I give up easily.	" I slide to second and I think I'm safe but I'm out so I get angry."
	" I'm a sore loser." (3)**
	" to give up when you are playing a card game because you don't like it."
	" if your team is losing and it is at the end of the first inning, you quit."
	" if you are playing a game and you don't want to play, You give up."
(21) I am good in my school work.	" to behave well."
	" to be studying."
	" to be quiet."
(22) I do many bad things.	" you don't do the things right. To get all your work wrong."
	" I'm a bad worker. I do bad schoolwork."
(25) I behave badly at home.	" to be dirty."

(26) I am slow in finishing my school work.	" you write slow in math and in handwriting."
(27) I am an important member of my class.	" to be part of the class."
(28) I am nervous.	" to be shy."
(30) I can give a good report in front of the class.	" I'm a bad worker."
(31) In school I am a dreamer.	" I fall asleep a lot." " to doze off in school." " to go to sleep."
(35) I am obedient at home.	" I don't know what obedient means." (6)** " to be bad at home." " you always ask for something." " you are not good." " when you do something bad."
(36) I am lucky.	" to wear a special necklace."
(38) My parents expect too much of me.	" to always be doing something too much. Riding your bike too much." (no response) " My parents think I am very smart."

(40)	I feel left out of things.	" when you play baseball game and the ball doesn't come to you, you feel left out."
(46)	I am among the last to be chosen for games.	" almost the last." " to be the last one on line." " You don't like being last." " to be chosen last to play because you might not be old enough."
(47)	I am sick a lot.	" you don't feel so good sometimes."
(49)	My classmates in school think I have good ideas.	" an idea is a choice."
(54)	I am good looking.	" to be dressed very well."
(55)	I have lots of pep.	" to be flashy." " like you are calm." " to have lots of rabbits and stuff." " that you are not nice to other people." " I don't know what pep means." (5)**

(57) I am popular with boys.

" I am well known with boys."
" I am very familiar with boys."
" popular is famous- everybody knows you."
" I don't know what popular means."
" A lot of boys know me." (3)**
" You like them."
" that you know a lot of kids."

(60) I have a pleasant face.

" to like your face."

(61) When I try to make something everything seems to go wrong.

" something bad happens. To make someone do the wrong thing."
" it falls apart." (3)**
" sometimes you try too hard and it may not come out the way you want it to."
" when you are making something like a train set and a part is missing and then the engine won't work."
" to make a go-cart and try it out and then have it all come apart."

(63) I am a leader in games and sports.

" I don't know what leader means."
" You know how to choose a lot of games and make up a lot of games."

(64) I am clumsy.

" to be tired, to sit around and not do many things."
" to make mistakes a lot."
" I am nervous."
" to be dumb or lazy."

(65) In games and sports I watch instead of play.

" to be lazy."
" sometimes you might have shoes on,not sneakers, and you have to sit down."
" you got in trouble and got put on the bench."
" You look at them because you don't feel up to playing or they won't let you play because they have enough people."
" You are not interested in the game because after a while it gets boring."
" to watch sports on TV and not play outside because the games are interesting."
" to be interested in what they are doing."

(67) I am easy to get along with.

" I don't know what that means."
" I am simple to get along with."

(68) I lose my temper easily.

" I don't know what it means."
" You get upset when somebody hurts you."
" to be bad sometimes."

(69) I am popular with girls.

" I am well known with girls." (3)**
" I am nice with girls."
" I don't know what popular means."
" Practically all the girls know me."
" You like them."
" to know a lot of girls."

(73) I have a good figure.

" to have a healthy body."
" I look handsome- my hair, my face."
" a figure is something made out of paper."
" I don't know what figure means."
" Your figure of the group is good- sometning you made."
" to look pretty."
" You like the way you dress."

(75) I am always dropping or breaking things.

" when you throw something and you break it."

(76) I can be trusted.

(no response)

(78) I think bad thoughts.

" I'm not a good thinker. I don't think up playing a game.

" not to do your work in school."

" like stealing something."

" You drean scary things."

" People don't like your thoughts."

" If you had a nightmare, you would say that was a bad thought."

(no response)

" I don't think of good ideas" (2)**

" You are not thinking too good."

" You might not like the teacher and you goof off."

" to have a bad dream." (2)**

(79) I cry easily.

" If someone hurts me, I'll cry." (2)**

" If you fall down, you start crying." (4)**

" when someone throws something at you, you cry."

TABLE 4. Statements on the P-H CSCS misinterpreted by 17 third-grade students as evidenced by their oral responses.

Student #	Test score	Comprehension ability**			Item # of the misinterpreted statement (see Table 3)	Total No. of statements misinterpreted
		Superior	Average	Below Average		
1	77			X	(11) (20) (31) (35) (36) (55) (57) (64) (65) (69) (73) (79)	12 [12] ++
2	56		X		(11) (18) (20) (22) (30) (55) (73) (78)	8 [5]
3	63		X		(11) (13) (18) (40) (65) (73) (78) (79)	8 [6]
4	74	X			(11) (16) (17) (35) (55) (57) (61) (69)	8 [8]
5	56			X	(11) (13) (27) (35) (46) (55) (65) (73) (78) (79)	10 [10]

** As determined by the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills all of the students were reading at grade level or better but their abilities in comprehension ranged.

++ The figures which are located in the brackets in the last column refer to the number of statements which although misinterpreted were found to be answered correctly on the test paper.

6	65		X		(9) (11) (35) (46) (61) (65) (78)	7	[5]
7	75			X	(11) (13) (14) (20) (22) (29) (55) (57) (61) (63) (68) (69) (73) (78) (79)	15	[13]
8	55	X			(8) (11) (31) (54) (55) (57) (69)	7	[4]
9	77			X	(2) (11) (21) (31) (35) (38) (46) (49) (55) (57) (63) (64) (67) (68) (69) (73) (76) (78)	18	[17]
10	68	X			(11) (21) (35) (46) (60) (61) (78)	7	[6]
11	68	X			(16) (20) (21) (28) (68) (78)	6	[5]
12	71			X	(8) (11) (35) (38) (47) (55) (57) (61) (78)	9	[8]
13	69	X			(11) (13) (20) (57) (61) (69)	6	[5]
14	75		X		(2) (4) (11) (26) (35) (55) (61) (64) (65) (73) (75) (78) (79)	13	[12]
15	43			x	(11) (17) (20) (25) (35) (64) (65) (67) (78) (79)	10	[8]
16	73	X			(11) (38) (57) (69) (78)	5	[3]
17	55		X		(11) (20) (35) (57) (65) (69) (78) (79)	8	[7]

TABLE 5. Statements found in the P-H CSCS considered by the examiner to be ambiguous based upon the oral responses received from 17 third-grade students.

Item # and Statement **	Listing of the different oral responses reflecting students' interpretation of the statement ++
(7) I get nervous when the teacher calls on me.	- anticipation of punishment for misbehaving - anticipation of giving an incorrect answer
(9) When I grow up I will be an important person.	- of importance to ones community. - of importance to ones country - of importance to ones state - having professional status
(12) I am well behaved in school.	- exhibiting positive overt behaviors - concentrating on school work and therefore achieving

** Due to the wording, the intended meanings of these statements are vulnerable to different interpretations. Nevertheless, students' variant interpretations were considered acceptable by the examiner providing they were logical.

++ For the purpose of clarity, these responses have been reworded by the examiner according to what she perceived the student meant by his/her response.

(13)	It is usually my fault when something goes wrong.	- to be the one who is causing the problem - to be accused of doing something although innocent of the act
(24)	I am good in music.	- to have ability as a singer - to have ability as a musician
(26)	I am slow in finishing my schoolwork.	- taking the time to reflect before responding - lacking scholastic competence
(30)	I can give a good report in front of the class.	- quality of the oral delivery of the report - quality of the content of the report
(38)	My parents expect too much of me.	- excessive assignments of household chores - denial of academic limitations
(63)	I am a leader in games and sports.	- attributed to popularity - attributed to athletic ability
(65)	In games and sports I watch instead of play.	- attributed to being unpopular - attributed to lacking athletic ability
(70)	I am a good reader.	- having skill in word recognition - having skill in comprehension - a rapid reader

TABLE 6. Additional data to support the contention that the test scores lack authenticity.

Student #	Test score	No. of ambiguous statements answered incorrectly on the test paper	Item # of the ambiguous statement (see Table 5)	Sets of statements which were involved in the student demonstrating inconsistency in attitude (see Table 1)
1	77	0		
2	56	5	(9)(24)(30)(38)(63)	(18, 67, 68)(8, 54)(5, 21, 53, 66, 70)
3	63	1	(63)	(11, 51)(29, 41, 54)(64, 75)(56, 67)
4	74	0		(3, 6)(28, 37, 74)
5	56	4	(24)(26)(38)(63)	(3, 6)(5, 16)(39, 43)(2, 52, 4)(48, 80) (56, 67, 68)(64, 75)(11, 57, 69) (39, 14, 48, 56)
6	65	1	(7)	(3, 51)(5, 21, 66, 53, 7, 10)(27, 49) (8, 54, 29, 41)(3, 6)(5, 21, 66,70, 45) (2, 50, 52)(58, 62)(67, 68) (7, 10, 28, 37)
7	75	2	(30)(63)	(28, 37, 74, 44)

8	55	5	(7)(26)(30)(38)(63)	(11, 51)(15, 47, 55)(5, 16, 21, 53) (8, 54)(38, 5, 21, 22, 76, 35, 66, 53) (44, 37, 28, 47)
9	77	1	(65)	
10	68	1	(63)	(2, 50, 52)(8, 54)(15, 47, 55)
11	68	1	(9)	(54, 60)
12	71	3	(24, 26, 70)	(3, 51)(3, 6)(28, 37, 74)(11, 51, 57, 69) (5, 21, 70)
13	69	2	(24, 63)	(22, 80)(18, 67)(8, 29, 41, 54)
14	75	1	(9)	(28, 37)(58, 62)(78, 80)
15	43	7	(7)(9)(12)(24)(26) (30)(70)	(3, 51)(11, 51)(5, 21, 53, 66, 70) (4, 52)(15, 47, 55)(58, 62)(22, 80) (25, 35)(56, 67, 68, 18)
16	73	1	(63)	(11, 51)(11, 40)
17	55	3	(13)(26)(63)	(11, 51)(5, 16)(5, 53)(4, 52)(2, 4, 50) (8, 29, 41, 54)(39, 43)(27, 49)